

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 44, wherein said at least one distribution server further includes:

a distribution method determination rule holding unit operable to hold a distribution method determination rule, the distribution method determination rule indicating a rule to determine whether the usage control data of the content is distributed by the multicast distribution method or the unicast distribution method according to whether or not the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited; and

a distribution method determination unit operable to determine the distribution method with reference to the distribution method determination rule corresponding to an attribute of the content,

wherein said usage control data distribution unit distributes the usage control data according to the distribution method determined by said distribution method determination unit.

8. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 7, further comprising a content server for distributing ~~contents~~content to said client apparatus, wherein said at least one distribution management server further includes:

a method information generation unit operable to generate information indicating the determined distribution method; and

a method information sending unit operable to send the generated information indicating the distribution method to said content server by associating the generated information with the ~~contents~~content to be distributed,

wherein said content server distributes the ~~contents~~content including the information indicating the distribution method.

9. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 8, wherein said client apparatus includes:

a content obtainment unit operable to obtain a content from said content server;

a distribution method identification unit operable to extract the information indicating

the distribution method from the obtained content and identify the distribution method for the usage control data corresponding to the content based on the extracted information; and

a usage control data obtainment unit operable to obtain the usage control data from said distribution server according to the identified distribution method.

10. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 9, wherein said usage control data obtainment unit (1) requests said usage control data distribution unit to distribute the usage control data corresponding to the obtained content when the identified distribution method is the unicast distribution method, and (2) waits until a predetermined distribution time at which the usage control data corresponding to the content is distributed when the identified distribution method is the multicast distribution method.

11. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 7, wherein said distribution management server further includes:

a method information generation unit operable to generate information indicating the determined distribution method; and

a method information sending unit operable to send the generated information indicating the distribution method to said client apparatus, and

said client apparatus includes:

a method information obtainment unit operable to obtain the information indicating the distribution method from said distribution management server;

a distribution method identification unit operable to identify the distribution method for the usage control data corresponding to the content based on the information indicating the distribution method; and

a usage control data obtainment unit operable to obtain the usage control data from said distribution server according to the identified distribution method.

12. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 11, wherein said usage control data obtainment unit (1) requests said usage control data distribution unit to distribute the usage control data corresponding to obtained content when the identified distribution method is the unicast distribution method, and (2) waits until a

predetermined distribution time at which the usage control data corresponding to the content distributed when the identified distribution method is the multicast distribution method.

13. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 44, wherein said at least one distribution server including said usage control data distribution unit further includes an authentication unit to authenticate said client apparatus as an authorized user when said client apparatus is recognized as a previously registered client apparatus through communication with each client apparatus, and said usage control data distribution unit distributes the usage control data only to said client apparatus recognized as an authorized user.

14. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 13, wherein said authentication unit authenticates said client apparatus by a PKI method.

15. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 13, wherein said authentication unit authenticates said client apparatus by a common key system.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 44, further comprising a user management server that distributes a predetermined decryption key only to a previously registered user,

wherein said at least one distribution server includes a control data encryption unit operable to encrypt the usage control data determined to be distributed by the multicast distribution method, using a key corresponding to the predetermined decryption key, and said usage control data distribution unit distributes the encrypted usage control data.

18. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 44, further comprising a content server which distributes only content whose usage control data is determined to be distributed by the unicast distribution method, wherein said usage control data distribution unit distributes only the usage control data of

the content to be distributed by said content server.

19-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The content usage management system according to Claim 44, wherein the usage control data further includes a use condition for using content, and said client apparatus further includes a reproduction control unit operable to extract the use condition from the obtained usage control data and control said reproduction unit to perform the reproduction within an extent to which the extracted use condition is satisfied.

24-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently Amended) The distribution server according to Claim 46, further comprising a distribution method determination rule holding unit operable to hold a distribution method determination rule, the distribution method determination rule indicating a rule to determine whether the usage control data of the content is distributed by the multicast distribution method or the unicast distribution method according to whether or not the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited,

wherein a distribution method determination unit determines the distribution method with reference to the distribution method determination rule corresponding to an attribute of the content, and said usage control data distribution unit distributes the usage control data according to the distribution method determined by said distribution method determination unit.

40-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A content usage management system comprising:

a client apparatus that reproduces distributed content; ~~and~~

at least one distribution server; and

a database configured to store content to be distributed, the database being a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium, wherein

said client apparatus includes a usage control data receiving unit operable to receive

usage control data including a key used for reproduction of the distributed content from said at least one distribution server, and a reproduction unit operable to reproduce the distributed content using the usage control data, and

said at least one distribution server includes a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether or not the content distributed to said client apparatus is content having a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by the usage control data ~~or not~~, and a usage control data distribution unit operable ~~to~~ to:

(a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from said client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including said client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to said plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited.

45. (Currently Amended) A content usage management method comprising:

storing, in a database, content to be distributed, the database being a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium;

confirming, at an at least one distribution server, whether or not the content distributed to a client apparatus that reproduces distributed content, is content having a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by the usage control data ~~or not~~;

~~(a)~~ distributing, from the at least one distribution server, usage control data including a key used for reproduction of distributed content, by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from the client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is ~~limited, limited;~~ and

~~(b)~~ distributing, from the at least one distribution server, the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including the client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to the plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited;

receiving, at the client apparatus, the usage control data from the at least one distribution

server; and

reproducing the content at the client apparatus using the usage control data.

46. (Currently Amended) A distribution server which distributes usage control data to a client apparatus, ~~said the~~ distribution server comprising:

a database configured to store content to be distributed, the database being a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium;

a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether or not content distributed to said client apparatus is content having a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by the usage control data ~~or not~~; and

a usage control data distribution unit operable ~~to~~to:

(a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from ~~said the~~ client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including ~~said the~~ client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to ~~said the~~ plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited, wherein the usage control data is data for controlling usage of content in ~~said the~~ client apparatus.

47. (Currently Amended) A program recorded on a non-transitory computer-readable recording medium for causing a computer to function at least as:

a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether or not content distributed to a client apparatus is content having a limited number of authorized reproduction times indicated by usage control data ~~or not~~; and

a usage control data distribution unit operable ~~to~~to:

(a) distribute usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from ~~said the~~ client apparatus, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including ~~said the~~ client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to

~~said~~the plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of authorized reproduction times of the content is not limited, wherein the usage control data is data for controlling usage of content in ~~said~~the client apparatus.